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CRIMINAL COMPLAINT FILED IN ANTHRAX HOAX CASE

FRESNO, CA.-- United States Attorney John K. Vincent, and FBI Special Agent In Charge Richard R. Baker announced today that a criminal complaint has been filed in the United States District Court in Fresno, California, charging Michael Christopher Murphy, 19, of Arcata California, with sending a threat through the United States Mail. According to a complaint filed in the case, Murphy sent an envelope through the United States mail that had the word "ANTHRAX" written on the back of the envelope. A white granular substance was leaking from the envelope when it was discovered at the Post Office in Reedley, California. As a result of the discovery, the Post Office was shut down. A hazardous materials team was called to seize the envelope and examine the area where the envelope was located in order to insure that no hazardous material, including anthrax, was present. The envelope was subsequently examined at a laboratory and was found not to be contaminated.

Murphy faces a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if convicted.

Vincent stated, "The United States Department of Justice will aggressively prosecute any persons who issue a false anthrax threat or any other form of terrorist threat. Hoaxes scare victims, tax the resources of an overburdened law enforcement community, and waste public

health resources. They simply will not be tolerated."

Baker added, "The FBI is firmly committed to investigating these cases. We must deter hoaxes to safeguard our ability to respond to legitimate threats."

The complaint filed against Murphy is only an allegation, and he is presumed innocent unless and until he is proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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